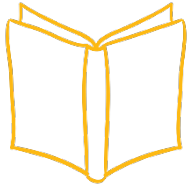


DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 14, 2020 – Mr. Burgess
As we look back to Easter



Read: Matthew 28:1-15
Key Verses: Matthew 28:6-7

Truths:

1. God is more powerful than anyone or anything!
2. Because Jesus Christ lives, we can face any problems or storms in life with confidence!
3. Christ's Resurrection is such exciting news that we need to tell others...quickly!



In last Thursday's devotional, I showed you a picture of the cross in our front yard with the **purple** cloth to signify Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. On Good Friday I put out the **black** material as we remembered Jesus' crucifixion and death. Imagine my surprise when I went out on Sunday morning to put out the **white** cloth! Someone had placed flowers around our cross!!! It was beautiful! It's was a celebration; JESUS IS ALIVE!

When we left Jesus in our last devotional, Jesus was dead and had been buried in a cool, dark tomb carved into the rock. Discouragement had set in among the disciples and followers of Jesus. He had really died!

Do you think the women who went to the tomb early on Sunday morning expected Jesus' body to still be in the tomb? (Stop and think, then check out Mark 16:1.) They expected Jesus' body would still be there; that's why they were taking spices to put on His dead body!

Why did the angel of the Lord roll away the stone? (By the way, Matthew is the only gospel writer who tells us how the stone was moved!) Do you think the angel rolled the stone away to help Jesus get out? No, the angel wanted to let the women and witnesses in...so that they could tell others that Jesus was not in there!

From that very quiet and very dark tomb on Sunday morning, "The Light of the World" burst out of that grave! God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus was ALIVE! The Roman guards certainly couldn't keep Jesus in!



David Roth (former principal of WCGS and current grandfather) texted Sunday: "Churches across America are empty, **but so is the grave.** HE IS RISEN!"

God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave Him the NAME that is above every name that at the NAME of JESUS every knee should bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11. Michael W. Smith sings, "**The grave could not contain the power of the Name!**")

Summary:

1. Easter reminds us that the worst in life has been defeated! The worst in life is not COVID-19. God defeated DEATH! If God has defeated death, He is more powerful than this new coronavirus...or anything else! "The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). **Therefore, we will not fear!**
2. What does Jesus' resurrection mean to us in simple terms? In last Wednesday's Prayer Page, I mentioned that our former night custodian, Bob Stewart (86), was in the hospital with COVID-19. We were saddened to hear that Mr. Stewart died this past week on Good Friday. His body will be buried today in the cemetery. However, because of God's power over death, when Mr. Stewart died, he was immediately in the presence of the Lord, the Risen Christ! Why? God has already defeated death! So a believer does not have to fear death.



Activity: I love Mathew's narrative of the Resurrection! In Matthew 28:5-6 "**Come and see...go quickly and tell!**" **Come and see** the place where He lay; Jesus is NO LONGER HERE because HE'S ALIVE!!! Therefore, **go quickly** and tell others that Christ is risen! Our God is alive! Please think of your friends and relatives who do not yet know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Choose at least one of them to tell (call, write, or text) that Jesus Christ is ALIVE today!



Prayer:

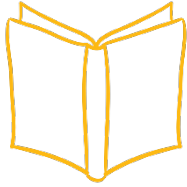
Father God, thank You that Jesus died on the cross so that my sins could be forgiven!
Thank You that Jesus is not still in a tomb near Jerusalem.
The tomb is empty! Thank You for raising Him back to life! I know that You are more powerful than death or anything else! In the powerful Name of Your Son Jesus, Amen.

P.S. I found out that the person who brought flowers to place under our cross on Sunday morning was Mrs. King! Thank you, Joanne!

DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 15, 2020 – Mr. Painter



Read: Luke 24: 1-12, 36-43

Key Verses: Luke 24:12

Have you ever been so excited about something that you couldn't contain yourself, and you literally ran to see it? Maybe a time when you drove for hours to get to the beach, and once you pulled up, you sprinted to get to the water first? Today's story has a similar situation taking place, but this isn't just seeing the beach—this is about seeing the Savior of the world risen from the dead! The first image I want you to focus on is of Peter (one of the disciples) running to the tomb. After the women had seen the empty tomb and were told by the angel that Jesus was no longer buried there, but that He had risen, they went back to tell the disciples what they had seen. In verses 11-12 it says, "But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb." For most of my life, I read that and have thought, "*Why would Peter have doubted so much that he had to see for himself?*" But the more I reflect, I think I probably would have done the same thing! And if you think of Peter in this situation, it may make even more sense as to why he ran to see the tomb. The last time we hear of Peter, he had denied even knowing Jesus. Now, he suddenly realizes that Jesus may be alive, and that all the things He claimed may be true! Peter may be ashamed for what he had done, but he also views this as an opportunity to reconnect with His Savior and friend. Jesus also knows Peter's heart, and it states in 1 Corinthians 15:5 that Jesus appeared to Peter (Cephas) individually after His resurrection. This appearance provides an opportunity to restore the relationship, and God even uses Peter as His point person to build His church in the book of Acts! What an incredible story of a relationship that has been restored! Jesus is in the business of restoration, and it brings Him great joy to see broken things made right.

As we look at the second passage (Luke 24:36-43), we see the disciples talking amongst themselves. I would have to believe that most of their conversations between Good Friday and Easter Sunday were about Jesus—feelings of sadness, fear, confusion, and uncertainty. Then suddenly, Jesus is standing with them. Whoa! Talk about fear and confusion! They don't know how to respond. It says they were startled, frightened, and that even after a while, they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement. We have all felt similar emotions, but probably not to this level. These disciples saw Jesus die with their very own eyes; they saw Him buried with their very own eyes; yet He is standing there with them! Jesus appears to several people and groups of people between His Resurrection and His Ascension into heaven. He used His final days on earth to restore relationships, spend time with people, and cast a vision for how these individuals would carry on His mission to spread God's love to the entire world.



Activity: As you think about the mission of Jesus in his final days on earth, is there someone whom you need to run to today to restore a broken relationship? Don't allow shame or guilt to keep you from approaching that person and asking for forgiveness today.



Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for Your example in how You love people and care for our needs. Please help us to carry on Your mission to spread God's love to the very ends of the earth. Place on our hearts the names of people we need to approach and ask for forgiveness, and allow those relationships to be restored in a way that brings glory to Your Name! Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 16, 2020 – Mr. Clum

Good morning! I hope you all enjoyed our first “official” snow day of the school year yesterday. 😊 I did. How are you all doing today? I’m missing each of you and the opportunities we are given to connect at school. I hope and trust that you are doing well and experiencing the love and care we have for you, even though we are apart. Have the best day!



Read: Philippians 4:4; 1 Peter 1:8; Romans 15:13

Theme: Easter Joy, Every Day

Easter brings joy and hope. Thankfully, Jesus’ resurrection is not reserved for one Sunday each year. The hope of the Resurrection is new every morning because Jesus rose from the dead and is alive today. We can rejoice and be thankful because we know and serve a risen Savior.

What brings you joy? How would you define joy? Take a few moments to reflect/think on these questions and share your thoughts with one another. As we are in the midst of this COVID-19 global pandemic and our stay-at-home order, one might say that we would find joy in being able to see our friends in person and spend time/hang out with them. Others might say joy would be being able to get together with teammates to practice for a spring sport (soccer, baseball, track & field, and lacrosse, to name a few). Our fifth graders might say joy is being able to go to Timber-lee for Outdoor Education. And our Jr. High students might say joy is being able to perform *The Wizard of Oz*, as well as participate in many of the end of the school year activities. Perhaps joy would be getting back to school! For me, it would be seeing and greeting you in the morning, connecting with you during the day, and having opportunities to invest myself into your lives.

In Scripture, we find that joy is tethered to knowing Jesus. Upon immediate thought, we may think it is relative to the experiences we encounter. Of course – the happy ones 😊 – the birthday party that’s coming up, your participation on a sports team, going on a family vacation, or perhaps going to camp this summer.

Yes, these can bring joy. But the Bible teaches us something differently. In Philippians 4:4 Paul commands us to, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I say it again, rejoice.” Did you realize that Paul was in prison as he writes these words? His outward circumstances certainly did not warrant his rejoicing, BUT his heart did. Why? Because he knew that Jesus was with him. His joy was centered in Jesus, it rested in Jesus, it hoped in Jesus, and drew strength from Jesus. Joy is not dependent upon our circumstances. Joy is learning to delight in God in all circumstances.

Kindergartners, you sang about this joy in your concert on February 20. You know the words well. The verses go like this...

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart.
I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart.
I've got the wonderful love of my blessed Redeemer way down in the depths of my heart.

I wish you could sing this to us today. But let me encourage you to sing it with your family at home. 😊

We can experience joy because we know Jesus. We can experience joy because we know He is the blessed Redeemer. (He lived, died, and rose from the dead.) We can experience joy because when we walk with Jesus, there is an inexplicable peace. We cannot explain it, but we know it's there.

I like how Rev. Hanibal Rodriguez explained it this past Sunday during our Easter service at Wheaton Bible Church. "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an **inexpressible and glorious joy**" (1 Peter 1:8). That inexpressible and glorious joy gives us an inner peace. We know we are going to be OK because that peace is not bound to our circumstances. No matter what we are facing, we are going to be OK because Jesus never leaves nor forsakes us (Hebrews 13:5).

Choose joy in your heart today!



Activity:

Especially in these weeks, it is easy to get discouraged about our circumstances and bemoan everything we are missing. Ask yourself this question. Am I experiencing joy as Scripture teaches us? If not, how can you choose to change your perspective?



Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You that You are the source of joy. Help us to live our lives tethered to You. No matter what circumstances we encounter, may our hearts choose joy. Amen.

"May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

DAILY DEVOTIONAL



April 17, 2020 – Mr. Brooke



Read: Romans 15:13; Philippians 4:4; Psalm 28:7

It was a few years ago when I sat in a worship service, and the speaker made a point about the characteristics of God. On the screen behind him, the many characteristics of God started scrolling. The audience and I were so encouraged as we were given a visual picture of who God is. We were reminded that this remarkable God was the One who runs toward us with the gift of Jesus and wants to be in relationship with us. The room was filled with joy, not because of our circumstance, but because of the good news of our great God.

In these moments, when my focus is directly on the things I know to be true about God, I experience joy and peace.

As we conclude the week, I invite you and your family to have some time to reflect. I want to ask you to participate in the practice of honoring what we know about God. It is important for us to be focused on the truth that true joy can only come from Christ and the freedom of being in relationship with Him. Joy is rooted in Christ Himself. I want to invite us to have a worship-filled time of naming the characteristics of God that allow us to live in true joy. Our joy comes from the Lord because He is so incredible! It is my prayer that this “practice” will reframe our hearts and minds onto the One who provides true joy, no matter our circumstances.

Would you be willing to fill in the dash marks? I got us started with a list of 5 characteristics. My apologies if I stole one that you would have used!

Characteristics of God:

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| - Loving | - | - |
| - Gracious | - | - |
| - KING | - | - |
| - Father | - | - |
| - Rescuer! | - | - |

As we remember, and name, the characteristics of God, our trust should grow. We serve the King of Kings who continues to do His work despite our change of routine. Be encouraged by the following verses as you consider the incredible relationship we have with Christ the Lord, who conquered death.

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Psalm 28:7

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my hearts trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.



Activity:

1) Post your list and be reminded of it throughout this unique season. 2) As you look back on the list you created, can you think of someone who helped you learn about that characteristic of God. Perhaps it was a teacher who taught you something new, a grandparent who showed you the joy found in Jesus, or a friend who encouraged you to know more about the love of Christ. Would you reach out to one person today and thank them for being a part of the process that has taught you about a characteristic of God? I think they would be thrilled to hear from you!



Prayer:

Father, fill us with the joy that can only be found in You. Thank You for Your remarkable characteristics and that we can be in relationship with You!